

## House Republican Press Release

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### What Hasn't Happened In the General Assembly



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

Memorial Day's parades and cookouts are past, summer is unofficially here, and as you are reading this, the General Assembly is heading into the last days of this year's regular Session. And unless we are suddenly overcome by a rush to organization and reasonableness, this Session will be distinguished by what has not happened.

As a regular reader, you know that the main task of a long-session year is to do the budget, and at this point there is still no agreement in sight, and the likelihood of yet another summer budget Special Session is becoming more certain. The Democrat legislative majority has continued to stick to its position of adding new taxes and increasing existing ones and exceeding the Constitutional Spending Cap. Governor Rell is holding firm to the parameters of her budget proposal. Maybe there will be an 11th hour breakthrough?

On all of the other items on the legislative agenda, there is amazing little to report. On the good news front, the 'transportation improvement package' proposed by the Governor is moving along through the process so far, and while her gas tax spending plan has been nixed as the funding vehicle, still, Fairfield County may finally start seeing major road improvements and those needed rail cars in the foreseeable future "down the road." And on the issue of a bill to benefit our local Piedmont Club and other similar social clubs, I am pleased to report that our bill easily passed both chambers and has already been signed by Governor Rell. But regarding many other items, where there should be more progress, with only days to go there are still a large number of major topics (in addition to the budget) still unresolved:

- 'Ethics reform': with all the news in recent years of investigations and resignations, one would think that this would have been a high priority, but wrangling over details is still happening;
- 'Campaign finance reform': same comment as with ethics; Governor Rell is particularly unhappy that this remains unresolved after so many months, but the Democrats are still clinging to "taxpayer funded campaigns" as the centerpiece of their proposals;
- Cell phone/driving ban: passed the House, still no action in the Senate.

We could list many more if we had space, but you have the idea. Why so little progress? One reason, that the press has been oblivious to, is that with new leadership in the House and Senate on the majority side, there were many new Committee chairs appointed. Therefore, the reality is that our legislative work product, and "bill drafting quality control" quite frankly has been horrible. As Republicans are in the minority, unfortunately our control of the process is limited to attempting to amend bills as they come to the floor (since we do not control the agenda), and Republican amendments, no matter how well intended, usually fail simply because they are from Republicans. It is certainly aggravating not to be able to have better control of both process and product.

So in the meantime, we have burned up countless long hours on death penalty debates, the gay marriage issue, and a bill to equalize penalties between crack and powdered cocaine dealers (you might guess that I did not vote for that one; there is still hope that Governor Rell might veto the bill) and last week's "major legislation" on yet another State mandate on our local boards and municipalities, the "school nutrition bill."

I heard from Board of Education members who sensibly pointed out that while everyone is concerned about childhood obesity, they could run their own local school systems quite well thank you, without still more directives and regulations from Hartford! There is little time left to legislate, and in my view, little major legislating has been done to date.

But as always, much of the legislative news is crammed into the last hours. Stay tuned!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.